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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2413

May 19, 1989

WEATHER WORRIES CONTINUE -- Although winter wheat conditions are improving in the Pacific Northwest and northern Great Plains, they are continuing to deteriorate in the central and southern Great Plains, a USDA drought task force said May 16. The 1989 Drought Task Force, headed by Undersecretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs Richard Crowder, said hay stocks nationwide are down 36 percent from a year ago while stocks in the Northern Plains have fallen by 57 percent.

LOWER CHOLESTEROL EGGS -- Eggs have about a fifth less cholesterol than previously believed, according to a new study supervised by USDA. The study found the average large egg (50 grams) has about 213 milligrams of dietary cholesterol, significantly less than the 274 milligrams reported in USDA guidelines since 1976. Why did the numbers change? More precise measuring procedures and possibly more refined feeding practices for laying hens. Contact: Robert Rizek (301) 436-8457.

RISKS OF THE SOVIET WHEAT DEAL -- Because of the recent subsidized wheat sale to the Soviet Union, some consumer groups are worried about a sudden price surge in grain prices, reminiscent of the 1972-73 Russian grain sale, according to Warren T. Brookes in the Washington Times. During the 70's, the price of wheat tripled in two years and consumer food price inflation more than tripled. Today's market conditions are similar to the 1971-73 period, Brookes says.

GYPSY MOTHS DYING TO HEAR FROM ABBY -- A new strain of virus known as "Abby" may soon have tree-damaging gypsy moths dying. According to USDA Entomologist Martin Shapiro, Abby kills gypsy moth caterpillars, but doesn't harm anything else. Abby is a biological control that can be transmitted from generation to generation of moths, unlike chemical controls, and can perpetuate itself within the moth populations. USDA will field test Abby this summer in western Maryland. Contact: Martin Shapiro (301) 344-4327.

4-H GOES UPTOWN -- 4-H is breaking new ground today, giving a contemporary look to the old-fashioned youth development program. But, underneath its city face, 4-H remains what it has always been. Urban 4-H agents face the challenges of changing family lifestyles and values, critical social problems, competing youth activities and nontraditional settings. Traditionally, 4-H clubs met two nights a week. Today, however, it's hard to find just one night a week when all the members can meet, says Floyd Jones, 4-H coordinator in Pittsburgh. Contact: Christy Rambeau (814) 863-2706.

BJERKE NAMED TO HEAD ASCS -- Secretary Yeutter has named Keith D. Bjerke (B-YERK'-E) to head USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Bjerke is a North Dakota farmer, consultant and businessman. Since 1964, he has owned and operated Spruce Row Farm, Northwood, N.D., a 3,500-acre operation producing hard red spring wheat, malting barley, soybeans, dry edible beans, corn, alfalfa and hogs.

FARMLINE -- You might like to take another look at the April 1989 issue of Farmline. Along with an export outlook and a story on "Farmer Mac" gearing up, the middle opens up to give you the latest phone listings for USDA's economic experts. For a copy, call Jack Harrison (202) 786-1494.

MORE RECENT INFO -- Last week we told you about the 1989 Yearbook of Agriculture, which will be called "Farm Management: How to Achieve Your Farm Business Goals." It's still due out in November (we got that right); however, the cost will be closer to \$10. The good news is, as in the past, media review copies will continue to be free.

KISLAK NAMED -- Secretary Yeutter has named Jonathan I. Kislak, a Coconut Grove, Fla., banker, as under secretary of agriculture for small community and rural development. Kislak, a magna cum laude graduate in economics at Harvard College, also has wide-ranging civic involvement.

OUTRAGEOUS HERBACEOUS -- Don't let the folksy ways fool you. James A. Duke, a botanist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, aims to convince us that natural medicines are superior to synthetics. Duke says medicinal plants grow right under our noses that are similar to the legendary Chinese natural cures currently being patented by the Japanese. Contact Duke at (301) 344-2612.

SALUTING FARM WOMEN -- Iowa Farmer Today is saluting all farm women during May. Why? Well, why not? According to Malinda Miller, Iowa Farmer Today field editor, when farmers receive recognition for outstanding production, the farm wife is simply mentioned, along with their children. But, you know darn well she's done much more than just raise the kids, Miller says. She's the one who watches newborn animals; drives tractor or combine; is the personal secretary; keeps the records; makes sure there's food to eat and clean clothes to wear. So, let's join the folks in Iowa to salute all farm women everywhere!

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1667 -- The apple industry in the United States is dependent on foreign markets for its continued prosperity. On this edition of AGRICULTURE USA Brian Norris talks with the Washington state apple commissioner about how our style of football is increasing apple sales in the United Kingdom. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

AGRITAPE #1656 -- USDA news highlights; Export outlook; genetic engineering in the cattle industry; safer rural water; Slow growth for fish farming; (Weekly reel of news features)

CONSUMER TIME #1149 -- Safer, more expensive water; bringing child care to rural areas; frozen "fitness you can drink;" a healthier hamburger; safe record keeping. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., May 31, ag prices, weekly weather & crop outlook, cotton & wool report, world tobacco situation; Tues., June 6, weekly weather & crop update; Wed., June 7, horticultural exports.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and USDA NEWS SERVICE are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D

SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D

MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFF MIKE

FIELD...hearings for the 1990 Farm Bill will be getting underway in a few weeks. Secretary Yeutter has testified to both Senate and House agriculture committees about the state of agriculture, and members of both committees are in the early stages of planning hearings in various sections of the nation. House ag committee press secretary is Jim Davis (202) 225-2171; Senate ag committee media contact is Patrick Collins (202) 224-2035.

NEW...farm services director at KOEL, Oelwein, Iowa, is Von Ketelsen. At his request we've placed him on our lists to receive the weekly radio cassette and this newsletter.

KEEPING...in touch is Vince Phillips, a member of the public affairs staff of former Secretary John Block and most recently serving at the National-American Wholesale Grocers' Association. Next month, Vince will join the Pennsylvania Association of Life Underwriters as its exec. vice president.

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VIEWER...reaction was positive to a recent TV item on our satellite transmission about Chinese hogs. John Spence (WNCT-TV, Greenville, N.C.) wrote to ask for more information. USDA-TV producers Lynn Wyvill and Debbie Janifer say an update is scheduled for mid- to late May when the hogs come out of quarantine in Florida. Chinese hogs produce large litters, and pork production is big business in Tarheel country. NICE...letter from Hope Schladen (Delaware Agriculture Museum, Dover). She is adding the 12-minute videotape "USDA-The People's Department" to the library. Copies available for \$21.90 at (800) 382-0080. Makes a nice gift from your station to your local libraries.



VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio and Television Division